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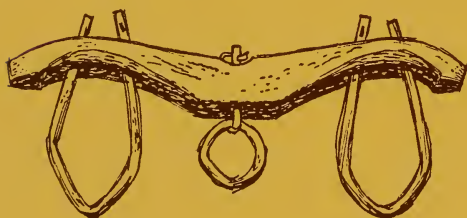
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Lincoln Kissed Her and
Other Verses.

LINCOLN ROOM

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George W. ...

Lincoln Kissed Her



and Other Verses

BY

ALBERT O. BARTON

(To the Memory of
David B. Frankenburger)

Madison, Wis.

1931

LINCOLN KISSED HER.

(Mrs. W. L., Freeport, Ill.)

Eastward the train of destiny was rolling,
Bearing a troubled nation's untried hope,
A sad gaunt figure striving mid the gloom
To hold his heart's high poise, his faith serene:
His sense of justice clear, his kindness sweet.

Dark o'er the land the lowering clouds hung thick;
Unquiet every heart, by fear oppressed,
As on his mission grave a man unproved
Fared forth, a people's trust his hands within.

With grinding sound the train came to a pause,
While crowded round plain folk of his own kind;
And sweet school girls above their heads held one,
A smaller sister late from England come,
Bearing an armful of old household flowers.

Sudden these symbols sweet, children and flowers—
Pledges of love—his heart with sunshine swept;
Around the child a great strong arm was thrown,
As gift and giver to his heart he took.
Then 'neath her cheek a touch, and lo! the hand,
For which expectant history held her scroll;
The hand that was to strike the lofty note,—
The undying echo of Gettysburg's high strain;
To lift a wailing race to light and hope,
And give emancipation a new name—
This great, kind hand her sweet child face uplifted,
And Lincoln kissed her!

The bearded face, the great brow-shaded eyes,
The strange dark shawl upon his shoulders limp;
The high hat bobbing like a stovepipe loose,
Smote her child soul with quick surprise and fear,
And home she fled in tears to tell her shame
Unto her English mother, who, perchance,
Had wished her child were spared this uproar swift;
Though Lincoln kissed her.

So, too, a nation was to wait perplexed;
To doubt, misjudge; to fear and ill construe
This man from out the soil so strangely sent,
Time's portents to interpret for its needs,
And with august commission shield its weal.

* * *

Faded those flowers of yore, and many since;
Their fragrance spent, yet lingers in their stead
Another waxing sweeter through the years,
As incense from the memory of the just.

Serene and sweet amid her memories bright,
A dainty lady sits—this English slip—
Musing on fate's inscrutable designs,
And why on her fame's favor was to fall.
Time stilled her fears, as, too, a people's doubts,
And mightily with Washington down history's page
Moves a majestic shadow once she knew,
Whose mortal orbit was to touch her own.
'Twas but a flash, yet how its splendor grows!
Time dims it not, nor envy cannot reach;
Her high distinction none may share or take,
For Lincoln kissed her.

MRS. PECK'S DREAM.

(Mrs. Rosaline Peck, Madison's first white woman)

Of old, Amphion's tuneful strains
Reared stone on stone, as runs the lay,
The massive walls and hundred gates,
Of Thebes, first city of its day.

Nor yet in our degenerate time
Need doubt the passing arts bewail;
A later Thebes, unwall'd and free,
Attests the ancient legend' tale.

When star by star Rome's glories fell,
Mid blinding flame and crashing din,
A faithless Nero sawed away
Upon a squeaky violin.

That fiddle, cornstalk or Cremona,
Ignoble symbol long hath lain;
Not so the one that waked Monona,
When Mrs. Peck took up her strain.

Responsive to her bow of might,
A stately temple reared its dome;
And still as higher rose her song,
Came tower and turret, school and home.

Now thousands tread the hurrying mart,
Intent on barter, ease or show,
Consumed with pride and thought of self,
Forgetful of the meed they owe

Unto a spunky little dame,
Who visioned here, as rapt she played,
A nobler seat than in the face
Of scowling Rome great Dido laid.

For Dido's towers are one with Tyre's
(And Babylon's, the haunt of sin);
Proud city of the sea, its spires
No longer shine the waves within.

While here, serene and full of light,
Our inland seas return the dream,
In widening loveliness that sprang
With Mrs. Peck and Vinnie Ream.

A hundred years that dream has grown;
A hundred more presage its fame,
When beauty, power and art shall wait,
Responsive to time's broadening claim.

* * *

No blazing plaza ours to gild
With stony forms of worthies dead,
Or we should rear, poke-hat and all,
Her shape whose bow of power sped

This learning's seat, this city proud,
Unscathed by ill, or war's sad wreck;
Yet in our civic heart a niche
We yield our patron, Mrs. Peck.

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SUNSET AT ALMA MATER.

Serene upon her green-sloped throne,
Girt by her shining lakes and streams,
She sits whose name we proudly own,
The mother of our dreams.

Steeped in the unsunken aftershine,
Down reddening miles from sunset sent,
Aspires each glowing line on line
To the glad firmament.

Blest symbol of our larger hope,
As faith reveals the vision new,
When truth shall walk her broadening scope,
The perfect day unto.

Shall doubt then chide that faith's clear eyes,
In the gold-gifted age to be,
Behold a statelier Oxford rise
And later Ruskins see?

When these calm walks by lake and mead
Have sacred grown by deed and dream,
And the proud grove around it spread,
Another Academe.

Then shall the deep-browed youth and pure
Breathe the large wisdom of the wood,
Leal but to ideals that endure,
True, beautiful and good.

Here neath her shrouding aisles of green,
Shall learning pore her classic page,
While gray time from his store shall glean
And point the worthier age.

And here the immortal maids of song,
Long frightened from their ancient clime,
By screeching steam and paynim thong
Shall yet renew their prime.

While science arrogant no more,
Subdued by beauty's deathless art
Shall ope to warmth her cloistral door,
And own a new-found heart.

Oh eims that thoughts of Allen wake,
And walks that D. B. F. recall,
Where Freeman sang and Bascom spake,
Your spell is over all!

Dear haunt where turns each fonder thought
Of days when all the world was young,
Green be thy every storied spot,
Thy praise on every tongue!

Sunk now the sunset light and low
Recedes each fading line from view,
Yet may thy glories though we go,
Brighter each morn renew.

ON VISITING TEARNE-WADLING.

(Tearne-Wadling is a small lake in Cumberland, England, between Penrith and Carlisle. There is a tradition that a castle once stood on its banks, a stronghold which King Arthur could not capture because it was built on magic ground. Its keeper had been bewitched into a giant and his sister into a monster that roamed the woods and fields. According to legend the sister's marriage to one of Arthur's knights would break the charm and deliver it into his hands. Gawaine, Arthur's nephew, consented to the sacrifice and won unexpectedly a beautiful bride.)

Dim dreams from memory's misty morn
On eager wings return that here
My pilgrim feet at last find rest,
On these wild banks, oh faery mere!

To teeming manhood's given the wish,
That childhood's ardent longing sought,
To one rich day but here to stand
And nurse a fancy overfraught.

How desolate! the inverted pines,
Mirrored below so darkly deep,
With the lone mountain seem to hold
Some tragic secret theirs to keep.

Where stood the magic castle old,
That once thy sable deeps didst glass
And foiled the stainless Arthur's hand,
Till love's sweet miracle should pass?

The love that found its duty first
Unto a monarch's wish was need,
And daring greatly, greatly won
Fit guerdon for a noble deed.

Ah, Gawaine, vanished long the keep,
Unridged the green site whence it rose,
Yet fresh into our unchanged hearts
Thine ancient tale in beauty glows.

How knightly fealty no thought
Save service for its monarch took,
Nor shrank in wedlock dread to meet
The monster vile no glance could brook.

Yet taken once the fateful vows,
Oh wondrous change! oh marvel rare!
Transformed the sickening folds gave way,
And rose a maiden heavenly fair.

Restored her form and freedom now,
And snapped the enchanter's hellish spell,
Brave Gawaine kissed his princess bride,
And down the clattering drawbridge fell.

And musing on the olden tale,
So sweet its charm unto my mind
No hidden meaning would I seek,
Though clear the lesson each must find.

Not far the perfect moral lies,
Tis ours to win as Gawaine won;
No mind may guess the meed that waits
On duty's lowliest service done.

OLD FAMILIES ARE LIKE OLD FLOWERS.

Old families are like old flowers; when we return,
After long years to some deserted home,
Of crumbling wall and staring front, and yearn
For old familiars that now elsewhere roam.

Though flapping board and tangled path foretell
That nature back into her bosom green,
Will take all these in her unhasting spell,
One pledge we find to stay the changing scene.

For bravely still where rose the garden bound,
The lusty hollyhock proclaims its youth;
Tansy and morning glory hold their ground,
And the paled rose surrenders not its truth.

These shall remain though all else goes its way,
Less than a Mayan mystery to become,
And shall retrieve some sweet forgotten day,
Though of its glory but the final sum.

So mid old towns decaying, quaint and gray,
Which once we knew but which know us no more,
Some lone name clings, scent of an earlier day,
Of some home circle and bright hearth of yore.

Gone now that hearth, that home perchance, yet still,
Abides this token of once happier hours,
Some human bloom its memories to distill;
Proving old families are like old flowers.

AT THE BIRTHPLACE OF A GREAT AMERICAN

(R. M. LaF.)

What a tradition will your high name be,
When the contending years their rage have spent!
Here shall men come with wondering sons in hand,
And pause the while in wistful revery,
Saying: "Here sprang a man, by nature sent
Forth triple-armed, with flame, high heart and zeal,
To front the later dragons of our land,
Whom others fed, nor dared to meet with steel!"

Your place on history's page not ours to tell,
Nor yet our children's; centuries long may pass,
Ere the impartial muse her oracle
Shall summon. So the recurring grass
Greens where old Israel's thunderers long slept,
Scorned still their race, their truths all now accept.

OCEAN MEMORIES.

Full rides the moon tonight, love,
And twain have passed away,
Since we with hearts so light, love,
Upon the sea didst play;
Upon the deck didst wander,
While loud the billows roared,
Nor ever dreamed that fonder
We'd grow each other toward.

Upon the heaving ocean,
What gipsy joy to ride!
While swelled a sweet emotion,
As swells the lifting tide.
Oh summer suns may brighten,
And other joys be sweet,
But where the charm to lighten
Our hearts as once they beat?

No, those dear hours are vanished,
As forms in dreams depart,
But still their joys unbanished
Troop back upon the heart.
In fancy fancy still I hear thee,
In fancy still I see,
And once again I'm near thee,
Upon the waters free.

With all the world forgetting;
How rich those hours and free,
And only this regretting,
They could not always be;
Those hours of dance and laughter,
The hurricane upon,
The sea fire trailing after,
And pleasure leading on!

—o—

A TOAST.

Comes thy voice like changing music,
O'er the lengthening waves of time,
And returns the ocean anthem,
Swelling to a strain sublime.
In the rushing course of seasons,
Swift a year has rolled around;
Waft us back, O, memory gentle,
Back to holy English ground!

Dear the land neath freedom's banner;
Dear its people strong and great;
Yet unto the mother country,
Who would stint the cup elate?
Let the votive bowl still redden;
Once again we're on the sea,
And the pledge that needs no urging;
Here's to England, and to thee!

HORATIUS BONAR'S GRAVE.

A bright, warm sun, unmarred by cloud,
Bathed Edinboro's glories proud,
When chanced my unguided pilgrim feet
To leave the dusty, clattering street.

Into old Canongate churchyard,
Where many a green-mossed shaft keeps guard
O'er dust once mourned but now forgot,
(The mourners' eyes now too are naught.)

And straying there midst high and low
I found the poor bed of Rizzio;
No gracious line to mark his rest,
A cold slab prone upon his breast.

And others, too, whom fame had lent
In many a heart a monument;
Sweet Ferguson, of envied claim,
To kindling the Ayrshire ploughman's flame,

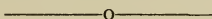
And Dugald Stewart's marbled praise,
With virtue's count and length of days;
But far in the obscurest nook
One lowly mound all reverence took.

Horatius Bonar's,—gentle soul,
Whose hymns, in many an organ organ roll,
Soar upward all the green earth round,
Breathing the heart's sweet trust profound.

Fading neath Time's slow rust the love
There traced; wild grasses wave above,
Nor jealous trees their vigil keep
Over the kindly singer's sleep.

Yet granted him the prayer he made,
That not where'er his bones were laid;
But graved the human heart upon,
His name might live for kindness done.

And musing there my spirit knelt
O'er the poor mound and, lo! I felt
Flooding my soul and all around,
A peace and rapture newly found.



OCTOBER.

October, regent of the circling year,
Gay, forest-roving gypsy, sumach-crowned,
Handmaid of Hertha, mid the stubbles sere,—
Sweet mistress, in your lowly service bound,
Let me beseech your hasting foot to stay,
While yet one grape-stained offering I may bring,
And one poor lay unto your worship sing,
Ere you are gone and all the world left gray.

But stay she will not, and we still must prove,
Our doom is beauty but to know, not hold;
She goes, and, reckless of her more than gold,
Kisses the fading forests with her love,
And leaf-heaped nooks beside some zigzag fence,
Tell our sad hearts that she is gone, ah whence?

THE RECOMPENSE.

Oh to be born 'neath a tricky star!
The buffet of roguish fate;
To be lured by lights that glimmer afar,
Yet lead to the fool's estate!

To be crossed in love till the weary heart
Grows sick in its futile quest,
Yet ever at some new face to start,
And to nourish a new unrest.

To forget our tasks while our fellows chide,
And pity us moon-struck clowns,
To muse how the glossy knot is tied
That some grace's young head crowns.

To be madly gay while the moon rides high,
To rhyme in freakish art,
To pursue with vain regret and sigh
The dream of a hungry heart.

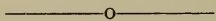
Yes, this the soul of a straiter mold,
May count but a fate untoward,
As it daily tells o'er its growing gold,
And deems it the wiser hoard.

But the large wild life of fancy's field,
Its magic of mead and wood;
The thrill at nature's heart revealed
When she bids us with her brood!

Does it end at last where all began.
No, no, hints the patron sky;
Yes, yes, sneers the earth, oh! foolish man,
Let the witching gauds go by.

Ah! welladay, let me have my dreams;
Their gold no hand can steal;
The ore of sunset, the silver of streams
Is largess to him who can feel.

Be mine my dreams; take o'er your gold,
Come love, that dost not chide,
Though poor our store yet behold! behold!
The sunlight flood the tide!



WHY LIKE A MIRAGE?

Why like a mirage,
Returns one bright day,
Out of the too dear past,
With a scarce fading ray?

Not yours to answer why,
Yet one fair presence there
Unknowing lent it grace,
Magic and rapture rare.

Could we but win them back,
Fain we'd take time in hand,
Days whose remembered light
Aureoled sea and land.

PALMA AND FLORA.

(To Mrs. Palma Pederson and Mrs. Flora E.
Lowry, La Crosse)

Two daughters of two ancient strains,
"As old-time legends say,"
Fate foreordained as pals, but lo!
A sea between them lay.

One 'neath the flaming boreal sky
Of Noreg's night was born;
But not for her the northern gold,
The cheek with tints of morn.

For in her folds of midnight hair,
Her dark eyes deep with dreams,
Some ancient desert strain shone through
Some hint of sanded streams.

Where unvexed palms through sleeping years
Brood on in endless light,
This seemed her primal being's spring,
So she was Palma hight.

In the deep shades of mighty woods
In a far western land,
Life of its sylvan life, sprang one,
Eager of heart and hand.

Lore of the wood and books was her's,
Wide grew her gentle fame,
Seeking and serving, well she wrought,
And Flora her lovely name.

And sundered thus through forming years
Each waxed in beauty's grace,
Till drawn by fate, as first decreed,
At last came face to face.

And where the mighty western flood
Rolls stately on its way
And a fair city sits in pride,
Each reared her lodge to stay.

Here through life's sunny summer years,
Have these twain spirits bright
Woven their fancies, visions shared,
Yet deigned to us their light.

* * *

Legend will spare to later time
Their fame—a symbol tried,
Lending a ray to gild the store
Of one fair city's pride.

Palma and Flora, here's to you!
Long and green be your years,
Of blended joys, as names and fame,
And a proven faith that cheers! .

THE RETURN.

Off Birkenhead our good ship lay,
And pointed toward the brine,
The afternoon of that bright day,
Of humpty-tumpty-nine.

Across the muddy Mersey's tide
Upon a tender borne,
We bade farewell to Liverpool,
With feelings strangely torn.

The trim "Dominion" bowed to take
So fair a freight as ours,
For there were graces from the States
And bright Canadian flowers.

And in our cabin company
Yank, Cockney, Kerryman,
A hearty throng on varied quest
The rosy west did scan.

With heavy hearts and mother kiss,
Back from dear English ground,
How many nursed a fond regret,
Yet helped the jest around!

From busy London's rout and roar,
Sweet lane and ivied wall,
How rich the memories we bore,
What tongue could tell them all!

Dear land whence springs our lineage proud,
We toast thee o'er the wave!
Long may thy fostering empire stand,
And Freedom shield the brave!

We sighed when fading Albion's shores
No longer we might scan.
Perhaps the ladies sighed again
To pass the Isle of Man.

Whose teasing lights a welcome blinked
As dimly we discerned,
The outlines faint of lovely fields,
For sight of which we yearned.

Next morn old Erin's sun-kissed slopes
Broke on our vision free
The vanished Giant's mighty stair,
Down leading in the sea.

And sinking far upon our right,
Stern Scotia's rock-bound shore,
Farewe'el dear land o' heath and sang!
Farewe'el forever more!

Then for one glorious week we held
Our stady outward way,
While song and dance made light the night
And brimmed the cup of day.

And churning on with mighty throb,
No rest our stout craft knew,
Thru floundering seas, 'neath frowning skies,
She held her pathway true.

And black the fog that round us fell,
And hoarse the great horns blared;
Day was not day, yet still our way
We held and little cared.

Then broke the storm and snapped and creaked
Our iron ocean home,
And hungry came the racing waves
To 'whelm our decks with foam.

And could we feel a higher thrill
Thus rocking on the deep,
Six hundred feet our see-saw board,
And fifty feet its sweep!

Now from their Arctic moorings loosed,
Came down the great bergs white,
Grim, spectral, still; no signal theirs,
Of helmsman, horn or light.

How trooping back the memories come,
The night dance on the deck!
How gay we laughed though wild the sea,
Nor had of care a reck!

'Tis ten o'clock and fierce the wind
Beats down from Greenland near,
But we are two, and not for us
The mirth and cabin cheer.

But high the hurricane upon
Mid creaking mast and spar,
We watch adown our glorious wake,
The sea-fire blazing far.

But not the storm, a sweeter voice,
Sings in my memory
And paling all the quivering trail,
Two brighter eyes I see.

And to this ocean cradle grand,
Borne on the storm breath's roar,
A young life came to win the name
Our gallant vessel bore.

And dipping in the swinging sea,
The "Scotsman" bade us hail,
Stout sister ship, that ill-starred trip
The last that she should sail.

While far upon the convex verge,
The "Californian" toiled,
But by a score of knots or more
Her dogged chase we foiled.

Then south we dropped, nor knew the thrill
Of Belle Isle's graveyard strait;
But when the morrow found us safe
Grieved not it was too late.

How fresh the spring-found joy was ours,
Bleak Labrador to view,
And Newfoundland far-stretching on,
A line of violet hue.

Do you recall that rocky cove,
The dawnlight glorified?
The drear brown slopes that knew no tree
The desolation wide?

The lonely exiled fisher's cot
Hugging the fierce cliffs high,
Here might from all the world withdrawn,
The outcast live and die.

But these sped by and once again
The broad sea filled our sight
Till beamed from Anticosti's Isle,
Its welcome, wavering light.

Next morn a score of spouting whales
In congress for us met,
Gave tumbling feats to please our girls,
And flashed a parting jet.

Then up the broad St. Lawrence tide
Three joyous days we steamed,
Past little clumps of white-washed cots,
One endless town they seemed.

The deep green pine woods stretching back,
The snow-topped hills behind,
The curious craft we passed and met,
That all the river lined.

And all the vale vermillion-steeped,
A fairy realm it spread,
A land to wake our childhood dreams
And vanished summers dead.

On past immortal old Quebec,
Where valor won a name,
Young Wolfe, the victor's glorious grave,
Montgomery, deathless fame.

One golden day shall never fade
From memory's jeweled store,
When, children once again, we played
Within the sunny fore.

Or gathered aft pursued a game,
Forgetting time or score
Who would not give a week to live
Again that sweet day o'er?

And oh! that eve when soft becalmed,
Off Trois Rivières we lay,
Who can forget the swelling pomp
That marked the death of day?

All hushed the rapt, adoring earth;
A sweet trance held the sky,
Great nature paused in awe to view
The obsequies on high.

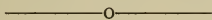
While ministers of light and flame
Their blinding mazes led,
Till sank the sun and we were left
To mourn a glory fled.

Then from the stokers at the fore
Uprose the sailor song,
And late we sate though loath to speed
Our last dear hours along.

But turns at length the enchanted lane,
We near the promised land.
Upon the decks the grips are stacked,
We clasp each meeting hand.

Farewell stout ship to memory dear,
Be thine no hapless fate,
But mayst thou long from shore to shore
Convey thy precious freight!

And hail, our lady of the snows,
Land of the maple leaf!
Thy welcome crowns a joyous week,
A voyage all too brief.



HOW SWEET TO DIE IN A SMALL TOWN.

How sweet to die in a small town!
There no unfeeling and blase aenemic,
Sucking a limp and listless cigaret,
Mangles you with a rough obituary,
A few crude lines, all wrong,
Wrung o'er the phone from hospital or morgue.
Nor are you hustled to the slab still warm,
To lie with noisome lilies over you,
In darksome silence till your burial hour,
When a few hectic friends dash up,
Leap from their shuddering cars and almost miss
Your slide into the hearse.

Naively they ask how much you left, nor join
The thin line leading to your resting place,
Which they shall never see.
In the great hive where you were naught before
Henceforth you're less than nothing.

Not so in Portage, Boscobel or Bem;
There kindly neighbors reverently call,
Bringing the sweeter flowers of hedge and home
To your own parlor where you lie in peace,
And bless your calm, upturned seraphic face.
Old women tread about, and too the men
Revolve your frailties, in which they see
Their own reflected and condoned.

Under the kindly hillside sod and clean,
Warmed with the sun and sweetened by the wind,
They lay you down, and then for many a day
Your virtues form the theme of evening talk,
And you become a legend.

How fine and deep such sleep!
How sweet to die in a small town!

WOODLAND FRIENDS.

(Read at meeting of Friends of Our Native Landscape, Warren, Ill., 1921.)

On a small rise of ground in southeastern Wisconsin stand a large oak and a large pine side by side. They have survived the ravages of man and the elements, and form a picture of striking contrasts. They appeal to the imagination and inspire to poetic thoughts. They represent so many opposing, or, better, complementary qualities that their preservation would be very desirable as living object lessons as well as things of rare beauty. In the oak is seen the qualities of simplicity, strength, firmness; in the pine those of grace, beauty, softness and endurance. The deciduous oak is also of a changeable nature, while the evergreen pine tells of constancy and never-dying hope. They are also the two trees typical of Wisconsin, the one representing the South, the other the North. The oak may also be fancied as the home and haunt of forest animals, while the pine, because of its dense and prickly foliage, is more suited to birds. It so works out in nature.

THE OAK TREE SPEAKS TO THE PINE

Dear neighbor, many a year we've stood,
True friends and tried together,
Lone relicts of an earlier wood,
Oft tried by wind and weather.

What kindly fate has sheltered us
Through all the years gone by,
From lightning, canker, flame and axe,
Ah! who shall say, or why?

Yet trials many we have known
And common perils shared,
Still thankful to have been so long
By man and nature spared.

What changing scenes 'tis been our lot
Through the long years to know;
What varied beasts and tribes of men,
We've seen appear and go!

Here rose the savory campfire's breath,
As ringed around its cheer
The happy forest children sate,
Unknowing hate or fear.

And in the grateful even's gloom
Their solemn pipes they smoked,
While many a dusky mother's hand
Her slumbering infant stroked.

Here as I cast my ample shade
O'er all the green beneath,
I sheltered many a wide-pronged elk,
Or wolf with flashing teeth.

These were my friends, though now and then
My ire they roughly stirred,
Though self-invited guests of mine
In feeling's code they erred.

One day two hundred years ago,
While yet a sapling I,
A giant bison from the slough
Clomb to this vantage dry.

And from his mighty hairy sides
Rubbed off his mud on me;
I creaked and bent beneath the strain,
From which I'm scarce yet free.

But as in time unto the blue
My limbs spread far and great,
The mightiest bear that roamed these fens
Scarce shook them with his weight.

But now, alas! he comes no more,
With his young cubs to play,
Within my leafy tops as once,
Nor has for many a day.

And all the other climbing folk
That joyed my leaves among,
The panther, porcupine, raccoon,
I've waited for them long.

They come not back, save now and then
Some squirrel gray and lone,
Like some pale ghost of olden time
To scenes it once had known.

In time this Indian's hearth of peace
An alien race possessed;
Pale, tireless, grim, with axe and gun,
They came not here to rest.

And in their wake a greater change
Burst on our green domain
Than we had known since first we sprang
As tender saplings twain.

Our kin they ravaged far and wide,
With axe and torch and saw,
The dusky children of our shades,
Stood bound in silent awe.

Now bird and beast and forest child
Are pushed beyond the range,
Cities and fields and roads have made
Their old haunts dread and strange.

We two alone by some strange chance
Of all that old-time life,
Remain to often question why
This new-time rush and strife.

And well we've done our separate parts,
In mighty nature's scheme,
Unto a common end of good
Though differing we might seem.

Simplicity and rugged strength
'Tis mine to body forth,
While beauty, grace, and changeless faith
Bespeak your equal worth.

THE PINE TREE SPEAKS

Yes, often through those still long years,
When mid our own we grew,
And little guessed the startling change
That soon we were to rue

I used to view with inward joy
The merry creatures race,
Around your trunk and up and down,
In day-long sportive chase.

But in my tighter woven green
Such sport they could not share,
And mine the equal pleasure was
To house the guests of air.

Where screened from view and safe from harm
By larger bird or beast,
With folded wing serene they slept,
Till burned each morn the east.

Then from my tops was poured the notes
That made the woodlands ring,
Would we might hear them once again
As once I heard them sing!

Or see those winged shapes more strange
Not given to sing or charm,
The heron, wild goose, swan and shrike
That rise with shrill alarm.

Gone too, the day you may recall,
When darkening all the sky
The pigeon armies on the wing
In endless streams went by.

Here rested many a friend now flown,
Birds bright and rare and strange
Of these a few remain to mark
The passing feet of change.

The jay and half-tamed robin still
Share my old house of glee;
I cannot fly with them, so they
True friends, remain with me.

And to my airy stop still comes
Elisha's bird of black,
The wise old crow that still defies
The distant rifle's crack.

And sometimes yet when falls the dew
And shades of night so still,
On velvet wing comes through the gloom
The clear-toned whip-poor-will.

Thus not so drear my lot as yours;
Some guests I still may own;
Yours slain and exiled long by man,
Have left you quite alone.

Some chipmunk, in a hollow branch,
Your crony yet may be;
But in the freer air still comes
Some winged friend to me.

Oft have I grieved old friends to lose,
And see my children slain;
And pondered what the play of fate
That I should thus remain.

Yet must we serve our destined end,
What e'er our station be
For all has place in God's design
Snake, flower, man and tree.

And each a lesson thus may show,
A purpose justify,
You have your part and I have mine,
We may not question why.

In your recurring leaf and bud
Which each spring brings to view,
Great nature's lesson is revealed,
Her promise made anew.

But when your barren boughs are swept
With winter's icy breath
The heart of hope may droop and doubt
And ponder only death.

Then shall my constant green renew
The faith that else were weak,
And through the gray and cheerless days
Of happier seasons speak.

Yes, ages here we've stood in peace,
And while our roots have blended,
Our boughs have never jealous proved
And never once offended.

Together rooted thus below,
And shading each above
We teach the law of living right,
In harmony and love.

Conceding each the right to live
In sunshine, air and light,
Each has serenely waxed and dreamed,
Nor feared the other's might.

Time's tooth no magic charm can stay,
Some day we'll turn to dust;
Yet let us hope we long may dwell
In perfect faith and trust.

As should all living things below,
To the great common end,
When in the all-embracing whole
Our sentient selves shall blend.

IN THE FIELD MUSEUM, CHICAGO.

I saw Field's name above the museum door;
It should be there, and so should mine, and yours,
O! timid farmer's wife from Tigerton,
With long black dress and the idea strange,
That this, and not Field's store's the thing to see
In this incessant screech and rush and roar,
Known as Chicago.

You dug a quarter from your scanty purse,
And gave the nice and slightly-bending guard;
That you saw go, but many more you've given,
In orders with a profit-margin wide;
Can it be said, like bread on waters cast?
There fruitage here now glorifies Field's name.

Our name should be there, too, oh, yes, less large;
So, too, should, yours, oh, swathed and shrunk
Egyptian,
In your split casket, for 'twas nobly done,
To save one's carcass for four thousand years,
Stuffed all the while with irritating salt,
And other condiments preservative,
To be in your new Cheops here a jest
For thick-haired, hurrying and jazz-minded fans,
From Hammond, Kalamazoo and Waukesha.

Yet other names with Field's and ours should be;
The bloke who daily beats his slipping wreck
Of something men may once have called a horse,
Through the fierce noonday bedlam of the loop—
And she, the factory wife, who nightly rubs
The grease and cinders from his reeking pants,
The while her grimy husband twists and snores;
These, too, have builded here with us, and Field.
The slender ribbons on their girls at school;
The bronze upon my mantel, yon lorgnette,—
These are the vouchers of our pledges past
That went into this mighty temple'd dream.

And others, too; the girl that hurried by,
With sad home janglings ringing in her ears,
To pound out office lies for thick-skinned hounds;
Yea, e'en the gambler with his flashy pin,
The pury banker halting to his change,
The artist seeing but his unseen world,—
Each has put blood into this parian pile.

We all built this; part of our very lives,
Is sealed within its every chiseled stone,
And in its treasures from all times and lands.

So shrink not, farmer's wife from Tigerton,
To step within this wonder house of art;
You helped to rear its line on climbing line,
And now should greatly joy to share your own.

I MUST GROW OLD.

I must grow old, my temple's incomplete,
From many lands and climes lie stones unplaced,
Column and cornice and jeweled panel meet,—
To build I must make haste.

No hand but mine can rear its fluted front,
No voice but mine can sing its dome to form;
Shall they forego their joyous labor wont,
While yet their ardor's warm?

Not ours to plan, rebuild and raze again,
Till night surprises us at tasks undone,
Nor leave uncrowned the walls that long have lain
Bare to the rain and sun.

In the great plan each has his task assigned,
Each must round out the dream to him revealed;
Fitting each block or gem his hand may find,
Nor rove too long afield.

Age has its greatening calls no less than youth,
Else were life futile,—yes, and how it stirs!
To fix, enjoy and hold each wondrous truth,
Or youth's exemplar errs.

I must grow old; my temple waiting lies,
To house the gleanings of life's varied quest;
Its capstone set, in ordered niche each prize,
And then, mayhap, to rest.

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